

NOW



NOW AD INDEX

DAILY NEWS LIFE&STYLE FOOD&DRINK MUSIC ART BOOKS STAGE MOVIES BEST OF PERSONALS CLASSIFIEDS

NEWS
DAILY NEWS
EVENT LISTINGS
SITE MAP
SEARCH
HOME

NEW
WANT MORE NEWS?
DAILY NEWS



DONISHA PRENDERGAST, THE GRANDDAUGHTER OF BOB MARLEY, PROMOTES PUBLIC SERVICE.

ON THE SCENE

Marley vibe

DESCENDANT OF REGGAE KING PUMPS RASTAFARI FAITH IN ALEXANDRA PARK LOVE-IN

BY SAIRA PEESKER

If Bob Marley were alive today, he probably wouldn't be making music. That's what his granddaughter says anyway.

There's just too much other work to do in the world, Donisha Prendergast tells an eager crowd packed closely around her in a grassy patch between the library and the outdoor pool at Alexandra Park on Friday night, August 5.

Promising a dialogue on youth, spirituality and the much misunderstood Rastafari, the charismatic actor and activist addresses a mostly adult group and speaks of her grandfather as a Rasta first and foremost.

If Marley were alive today, he'd be focused on doing positive work in the community, she says. "There's lots of good singers."

In his day, she points out, the reggae king was spreading Rastafari through a newly popular form of music, but now the movement has reached all corners of the world.

Prendergast, who was born after her grandfather's death, is here promoting a soon-to-be-released film, RasTa: A Soul's Journey, in which she visits Rastafarian communities in Toronto, Ethiopia, Israel and South Africa, as well as other cultures that share some of its practices, like the dreadlocked,

STORY TOOLS

- EMAIL
- PRINT/SAVE
- FACEBOOK
- TWITTER
- GOOGLE +1
- SHARE

Download NOW's concert app



THIS WEEK'S NEWS STORIES

- WEB JAM
 - The Blackberry riots
- ENVIRONMENT
 - Land use for the brain
 - Barometer
- FRONTLINES
 - Ellie Kirmzer on the NDP and the sovereignist menace
 - Newsfront
- ON THE SCENE
 - Marley vibe
- GADGETS
 - Doro PhoneEasy
- CITY HALL
 - Double dumb-down
 - Between the covers
 - Letters to the Editor
- BIG 3
 - NOW editors pick a trio of this week's can't-miss events
 - Festivals

676897
768929
ADMIT ONE
PRICE
YOUR TICKET TO WHAT'S PLAYING
Search theatres, times and what's on right now



Looking for a rollicking good time?

COMMENTS

Recent
MUSIC // MUSIC // ALL CAPS! ISLAND FESTIVAL

pot-smoking Hindu mystics of India.

Anyone looking to get a straight answer about the basics of the movement is out of luck at the Scadding Court event, an unstructured, two-hour Q&A. Audience questions jump from racial profiling by police to the cultural significance of the Queen of Sheba.

Asked to explain the culture, Prendergast says, "That is your decision. You must know when the time comes, and you must know what it reveals.

"Rastafari represents African-ness. There is no other movement in the world that shows Africa is the way forward right now and identifies an African king and an African queen. If you take Rastafari out of this world, then the colours, the dreadlocks, the music, Bob Marley, all of that is gone. You understand?"

The idea of sacrifice and public service comes up again as she traces her own evolving understanding of what it means to be a Rasta.

"It represents love, unity, peace, sacrifice, service and justice for all. And inspiration. And we are all divine beings. The only way I feel whole is if I do service," says Prendergast, who helped start a recycling company in Jamaica, where such services are uncommon.

"I grew up Rasta, but it wasn't until I began this journey that I realized I wasn't Rasta."

The film's Toronto-based executive producer, Patricia Scarlett, says she first became aware of Rastafari's reach while travelling the world for her job at TVOntario.

"It has spread to cultures that are not in any way connected to Africa or Jamaica," Scarlett tells NOW. "There's something in the message as spread through reggae that people relate to. It's really a reinterpretation of the Old Testament."

While it's not clear how many Rastas there are in Toronto, Stats Can figures for 2001 put the number at 415. Beliefs vary among different Rastafarian communities, but many believe in the Bible and see Ethiopian Emperor Haile Selassie I as a reincarnation of Jesus Christ. Selassie (emperor until 1974) was highly regarded on the world stage for bringing Ethiopia into the UN and writing his country's first constitution.

Many are vegetarians and adhere to an Ital diet: food that comes from the earth, without preservatives or other chemicals. Some also avoid salt unless it comes from the ocean.

But while ganja smoke may be one of the few things outsiders associate with Rastafari, Prendergast mentions it only once, while encouraging people to check out Jamaica's inaugural Manifesto Festival in November, a collaboration with Toronto's Manifesto crew.

"There will be lots of concerts, lots of life, reggae music, greenery, everything nice," she says.

news@nowtoronto.com



NOW | August 11-18, 2011 | VOL 30 NO 50

[Tweet](#) submit

Like

Confirm

You like this. · Admin Page · Insights · **Error** You like this Sign Up to see

Recent Stories By Saira Peesker
[HIGH STAKES DRAMA](#)

PHOTO CREDIT: THURSDAY FRIDAY
[THURSDAY FRIDAY](#) | 29 MINUTES AGO

[DAILY // NEWS // GIORGIO MAMMOLITI IS A COMMUNIST](#)

The correct label is 'political opportunist'.
[HAGENAAR](#) | ABOUT 4 HOURS AGO

[DAILY // NEWS // IT'S GETTING HARDER TO HATE DALTON](#)

Well it's your opinion not mine. And yes, A/C, in Canada, is a luxury. Maybe having A/C at home doesn't mean you are rich, but it means you are not poor. And ...
[ANTOINE GIRARDEAU](#) | ABOUT 7 HOURS AGO

[DAILY // LIFE & STYLE // APRIL WOZNY](#)

Is she wearing a diaper?
[JOHN SMITH](#) | ABOUT 10 HOURS AGO

NOW @twitter

- Bruce McDonald and more bring hints to TIFF 11
<http://now.uz/qSHXVU>
Wed Aug 10 2011 9:21
- "Power is just like electricity; it can light the room or it can electrocute you." @MargaretAtwood, 1993.
<http://now.uz/qt20A1>
Wed Aug 10 2011 9:06
- Lots more @Summerworks to see
<http://now.uz/pVRsps>
Wed Aug 10 2011 9:01
- RT @foxstatic: Hey, isn't this the cooking dance guy?
<http://t.co/gec93aF>
Tue Aug 9 2011 22:24

twitter

[Join the conversation](#)



NOW Magazine on Facebook

Like

Confirm

You like this. · Admin Page · Insights · **Error**
You like this. · Admin Page · Insights · **Error**

6,045 people like **NOW Magazine**. 6,044 people like **NOW Magazine**.



Joanne Andrew Maev Nicole



NOW Magazine on Facebook

nowtoronto.com on Reddit

- Does sex before the big game affect an athletic performance?
7 points | 3 comments
- Ford plays chicken with Toronto
2 points | 2 comments
- The burger war in Toronto continues. Toronto's 50 Best Burgers!
4 points | 7 comments
- Councillor in charge of Toronto's bike plan has been hired to dismantle it
1 point | 5 comments
- The first decent biking editorial post Huron St. cyclist accident.
14 points | 12 comments